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## Cropsey: Education Remains a Top Priority

*Senate today moved legislation to fill budget gap in School Aid Fund for 2003*

LANSING – Senator Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt, said today he will fight to protect education funding and is working with his colleagues to make sure Michigan’s public schools are not forced to shoulder the \$92 million projected shortfall in the School Aid Fund.

“Protecting education is a top priority,” Cropsey said. “We cannot ask our school districts to cut their budgets again this year.”

On Tuesday, lawmakers received a clear picture of the state’s economic outlook and revenue collections from the May Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference held at the Michigan State Capitol. Figures released at the conference show a significant budget shortfall in the School Aid Fund for 2003 of nearly \$92 million.

Today, by a unanimous vote, the Senate passed Senate Bill 183, sponsored by Senator Cropsey, transferring \$61 million from the general fund into the state School Aid Fund. The transfer reflects the estimated net shortfall in the School Aid Fund determined by the revenue estimating conference held yesterday at the Michigan State Capitol. The approximately \$31 million remaining shortfall will be handled by the refinancing of existing bonds.

“Shoring up the hole in the School Aid Fund represents my priority to keep education wholly funded,” Cropsey said. “We will cut whatever spending we can to ensure that the promised funding for education remains available to schools. Left untreated, the budget shortfalls in 2003 and 2004 could have a devastating impact on education in Michigan.”

Among the topics of discussion at the conference were the collection of state revenues since January, a picture of the state and national economy, and the impact of revenue collections in the 2003 and 2004 Fiscal Years.